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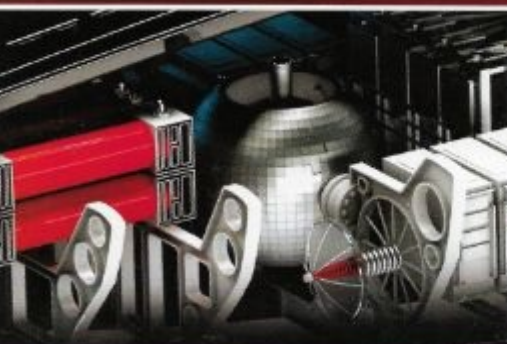


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WHILE UNDOUBTEDLY A blockbuster adventure, 1995's *Batman Forever* was also a sombre exploration of multiple personalities. Batman/Bruce Wayne, Edward Nygma/Riddler and Harvey Dent/Two-Face – these were three men with six identities and many secrets. With his world growing ever more complex, Batman also relied on multiple vehicles. His crime-fighting fleet included the Batboat – which cleaved through the icy waters surrounding Gotham City.



BATMAN AUTOMOBILIA

2 SERVICE HISTORY

The Batboat was a seaworthy addition to Batman's fleet.

4 UNDER THE HOOD

The Dark Knight's oceangoing craft is examined in detail.

10 LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT

Villains came to the fore in 1995's *Batman* comic books.

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THE BATWING IN ACTION

MAKING A SPLASH

In the comic adaptation of *Batman Forever*, the Batboat wasn't the Dark Knight's only waterborne vehicle. Struck by a missile launched from the Riddler's island stronghold, Batman was forced to ditch the Batwing in the waters of Gotham City Harbour. In so doing, he jettisoned the craft's wings to reveal a secret weapon – a sleek submersible that enabled the Dark Knight to rescue Robin and continue on his mission.



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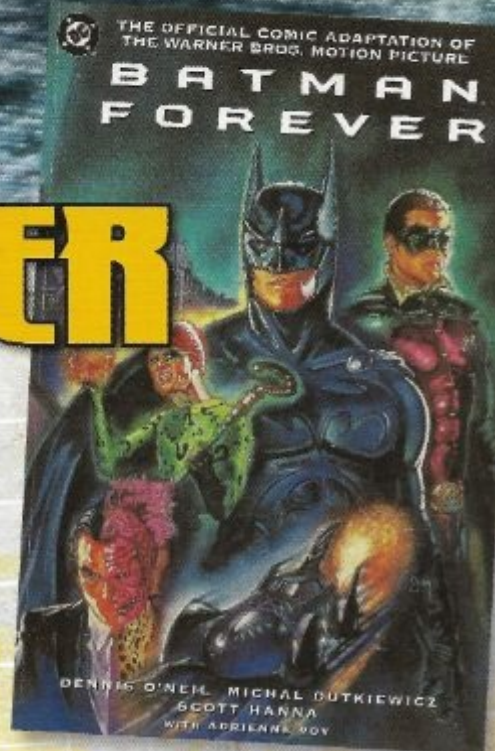


BLOCKBUSTER BOAT

WHILE IT MAY have only appeared in the final act of *Batman Forever* (1995), the skeletal Batboat still left a lasting impression on audiences. Moored in the lowest level of the subterranean Batcave, the Batboat had the appearance of a slumbering leviathan, waiting to be roused and propelled into action. Like the similarly-designed Batmobile, blue light radiated from within the belly of the mechanical beast to give it a ghostly corona.

OCEAN DEPTHS

The controls of the Batboat were remarkably intuitive and thus Dick Grayson – embarking on his first mission as Robin – was able to steer the sleek craft across the churning waters surrounding Gotham City with ease. With air support from Batman in the Batwing, the young hero closed in on the island headquarters of Two-Face and the Riddler. The villains weren't without resources, though, and they launched a barrage of missiles at the approaching craft. With huge plumes of water threatening to capsize the Batboat, Robin managed to steer through the explosive onslaught. One of the missiles hit home, however, and the speedboat was sent careering to the bottom of the ocean. Robin swam clear



of the wreckage and, with help from Batman, eventually managed to reach the villains' island. Although it had been destroyed, the Batboat had served its purpose. The rest was now up to Batman and Robin. 

SEAWORTHY

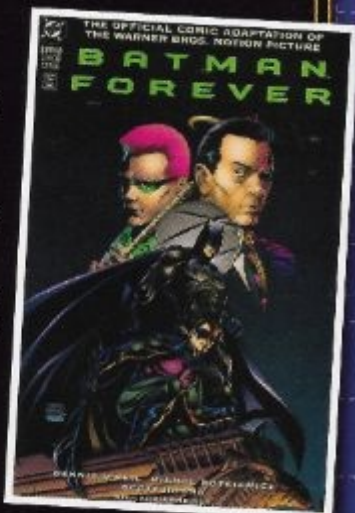
Bruce Wayne used his huge financial resources to create an unprecedented crime-fighting arsenal. Amongst his amazing fleet of vehicles was the sleek Batboat – a jet-powered craft that extended the Dark Knight's reach far out to sea.

FIRST APPEARANCE

Batman Forever (1995)

Batman Forever was the third film in the groundbreaking series that began with Tim Burton's *Batman* (1989). Directed by Joel Schumacher, it was somewhat lighter in tone than its predecessors. It was a glorious kaleidoscope of a movie that kept its colourful characters in a constant state of flux. The manic feel of the film was primarily due to the bizarre nature of its signature super-villains – Two-Face and the Riddler. Two-Face blamed Batman for the incident that had left him horribly disfigured, while the Riddler was jealous of Bruce Wayne's fame and fortune.

In his quest for power, the Riddler created an amazing device to feed on the neural energy of television viewers. The invention also enabled him to read Bruce Wayne's mind – and he was astonished to learn that the billionaire businessman was secretly Batman. Armed with this knowledge, the villains smashed into Wayne Manor. They sabotaged the Batmobile and destroyed the Batcave. Bruce Wayne was left at his lowest point – uncertain whether the identity of Batman was a burden or a privilege. He was propelled into action, however, by the knowledge that the villains had kidnapped Doctor Chase Meridian – a psychologist who was attracted to Bruce in both his guises. Batman was accompanied on his rescue mission by Robin, whose family had been killed by Two-Face. The heroes tracked the villains to their island headquarters – the Dark Knight taking to the skies in the Batwing and the Teen Wonder speeding across the ocean in the Batboat. The crime fighters ultimately won the day... and Bruce was reconfirmed in his role as a crusading Dark Knight.



CONCEPT DESIGNS
The Batboat that was featured in *Batman Forever* was the work of production designer Barbara Ling, working closely with artist Tim Flattery. As with the new Batmobile, they took their design cues from nature – creating a sinuous craft that was almost biomechanical in form. The speedboat's ribbed body and huge dorsal fin brought to mind the veins and gossamer wings of a bat. The jet-driven craft was an extraordinary sight during filming – trailing behind great plumes of water and giving the impression of a huge sea monster cascading through the brine.

THE NEED FOR SPEED

The sleek and slender Batboat could journey where the Batmobile could not go. It extended the Dark Knight's reach far beyond the shores of Gotham City – and made it harder for villains to evade pursuit and capture.

Sometimes a car just isn't enough – even if it is the Batmobile. With crime clogging up the waterways surrounding Gotham City, the Dark Knight created a speedboat to hunt down smugglers and net super-villains in their offshore hideaways.

Fitted with a turbo-powered jet engine, the Batboat could slice through the choppiest of waters. Launched from the lowest level of the subterranean Batcave, the craft had a unique radar sphere that enabled it to track other oceangoing craft. Its cockpit included a state-of-the-art communications array, and a computer-controlled system allowed even a novice pilot to steer the vehicle at speeds of 300 mph. Amongst the Batboat's many armaments were a pneumatic harpoon with a high-tensile titanium cable and a supply

of homing torpedoes. The carbon-fibre hull was constructed around a titanium chassis – so the boat was both lightweight and strong.

The fin-like tail rudder helped stabilise the craft while it was travelling at top speed, and also acted as a radio antenna. The Batboat's main thruster was multidirectional, churning up great volumes of water as the craft surged ever onward. This was a vessel that certainly made a splash!

SPECIFICATIONS

LENGTH 334.25 in (8.49 m)

WIDTH 77.95 in (1.98 m)

HEIGHT 91.73 in (2.33 m)

TOP SPEED 300 mph

SPECIAL FEATURES

ONBOARD COMPUTER Virtually a backup of the Batcave's vast data store, the Batboat has its own onboard computer system

TAIL FIN While the tail fin is primarily for stabilising the craft while in motion, it also contains a radio antenna that allows for instant onshore/offshore communications

MICRO-MINES With a low explosive yield, the mines automatically deploy to deter enemy boats from getting too close to the Batboat

TITANIUM CHASSIS Reinforced so as to absorb sudden impacts such as hitting the water at top speed or colliding with another vessel

AUTOPILOT Sophisticated auto-drive system allows even novice pilots to control the Batboat

RADAR SPHERE An array of sensors/monitors located inside the bow of the ship allows Batman to monitor other seagoing vessels

TORPEDOES A small arsenal of multi-purpose weapons with varying degrees of explosive power

Stabilising tail fin
with built-in radio
antenna

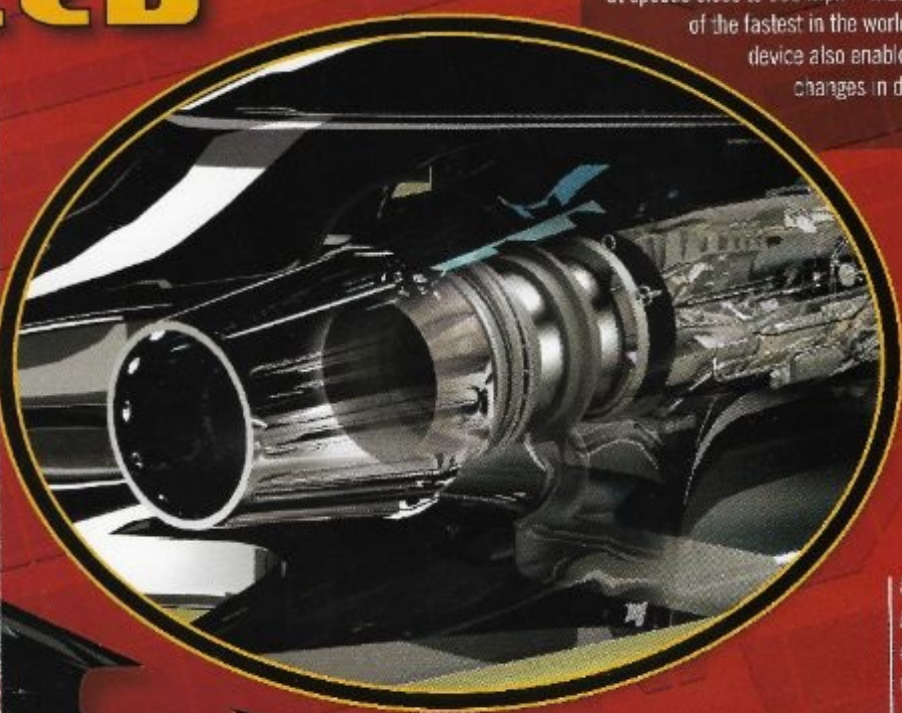
Blue neon lighting
throughout body
of craft

Main
thruster

ED

MAIN THRUSTER

The Batboat's jet-powered thruster propelled the craft along at speeds close to 300 mph — making the speedboat one of the fastest in the world. The multidirectional device also enabled the pilot to make sudden changes in direction.

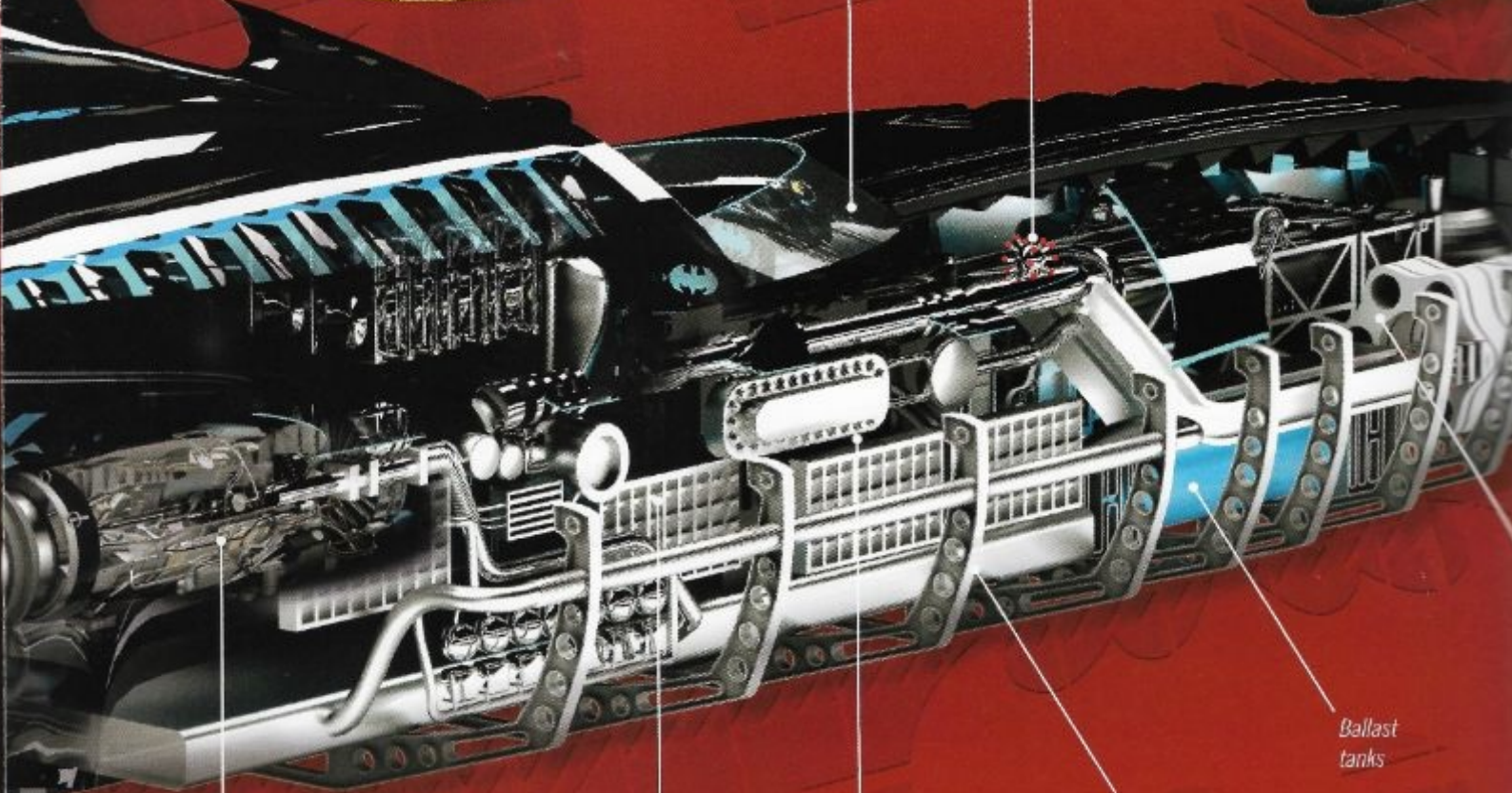


Warheads with varying explosive yields



Computerised heads-up display on windscreen

Self-dispersing micro-mines



Hybrid turbine with integrated fuel cell

Hull constructed from lightweight carbon-fibre weave

Anti-collision armour

Titanium chassis

Ballast tanks

Long-range torpedoes
with tracking
capabilities

CRUISE CONTROLS

The Batboat's controls were remarkably intuitive – allowing even a novice pilot like Robin to steer the craft with very little training. In the event of an emergency, a jet-propelled ejector seat allowed the pilot to escape the craft at the push of a button.

Torpedo launch
cage

Self-sealing
watertight canopy



Rotary weapons
launcher

Cockpit with
intuitive
controls

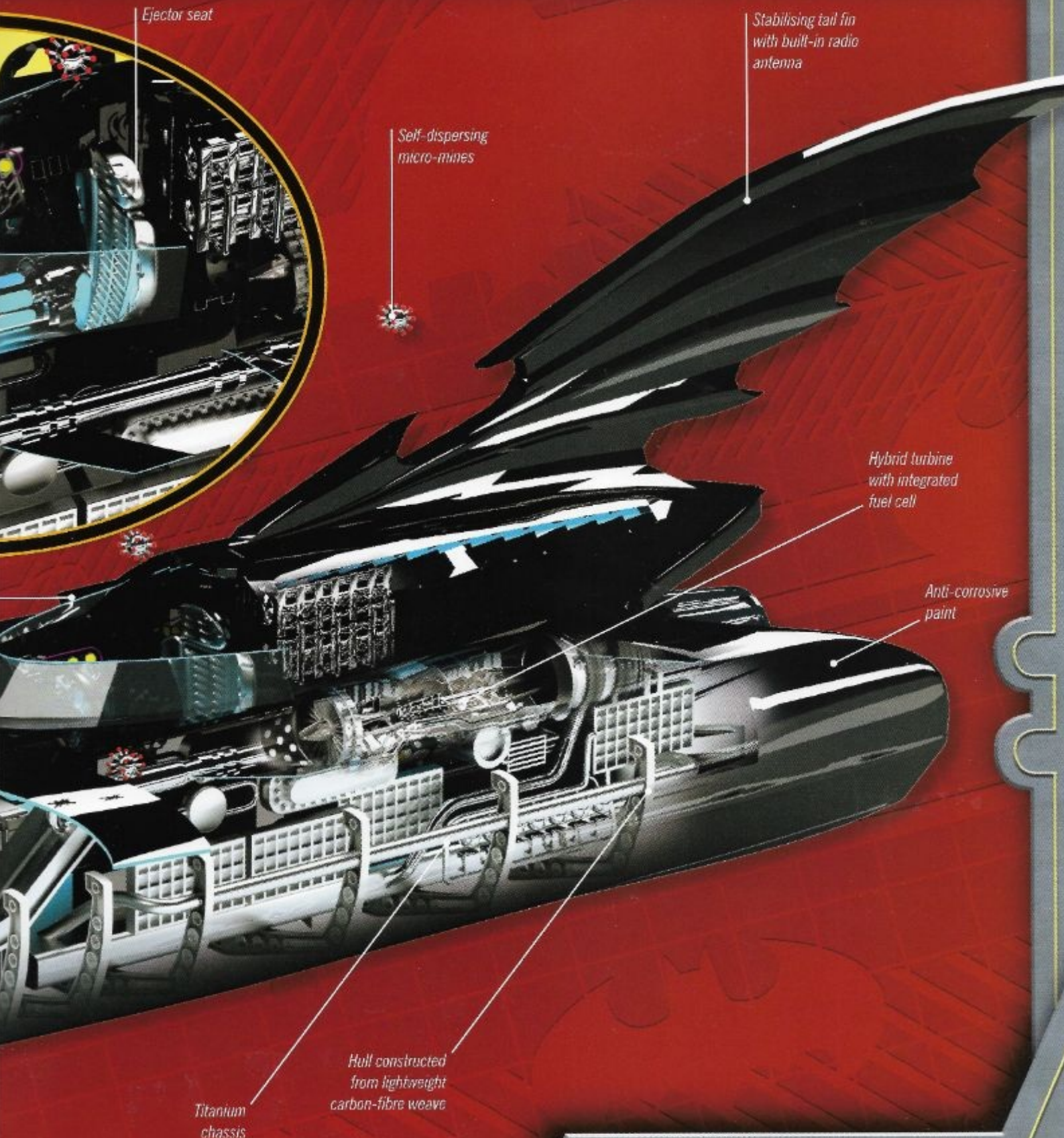
Radar sphere

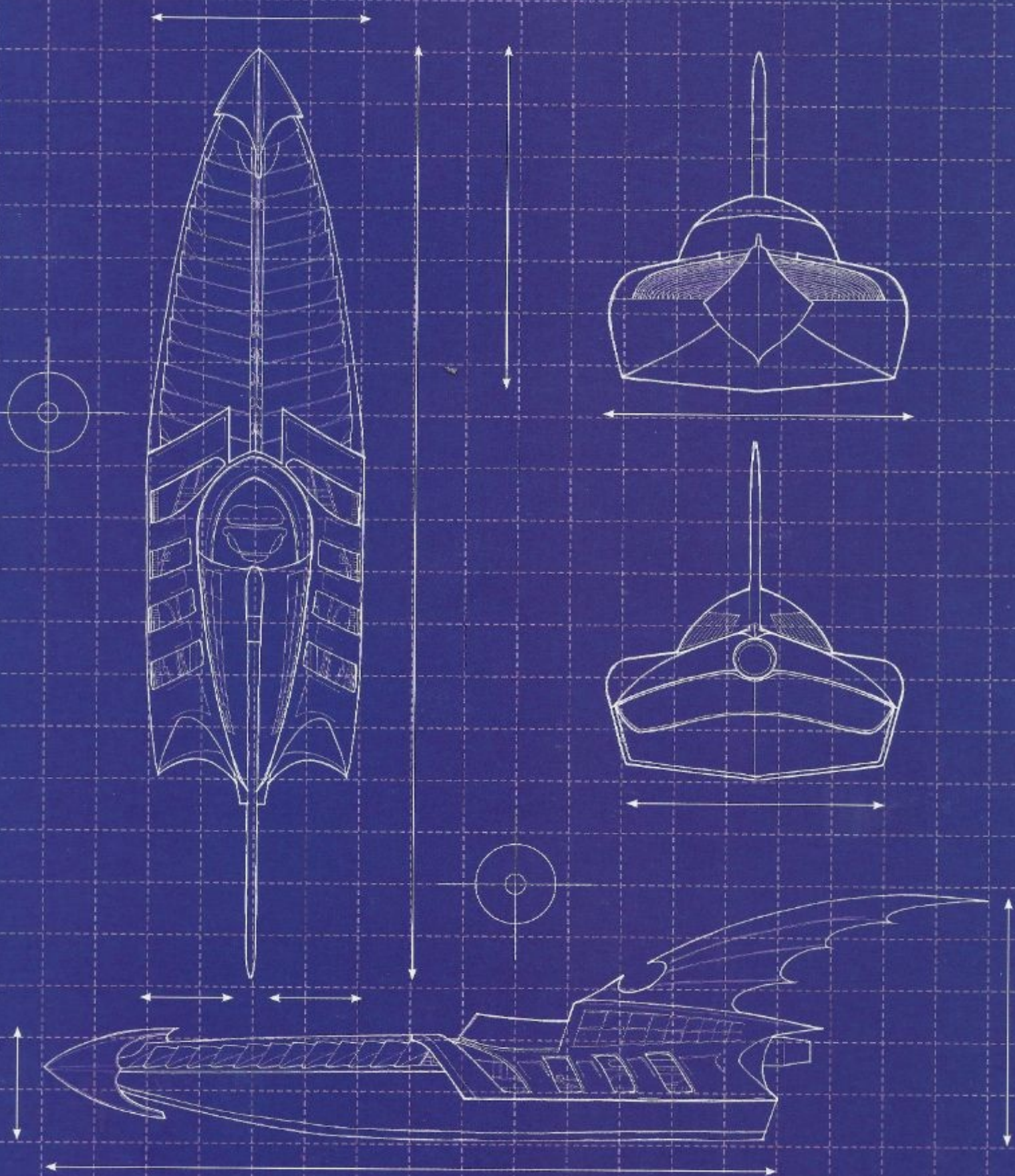
Hull constructed
from lightweight
carbon-fibre weave

Onboard computer with
a full criminal database

Ballast
tanks

weapons
er





BATMAN '95

1995 saw Batman haunted by super-villains at every turn. The past crowded in to distort the present – and the Dark Knight seemed mired in a never-ending battle with unbeatable foes.

1995 WAS ANOTHER blockbuster year for the Dark Knight (see *Batman: Automobilia* #4 for a full overview). Joel Schumacher's hi-octane *Batman Forever* was a huge box-office hit, launching a veritable tsunami of merchandise, including numerous comic book tie-ins. Foremost amongst these was a 64-page adaptation of the movie itself by writer Dennis O'Neil and artists

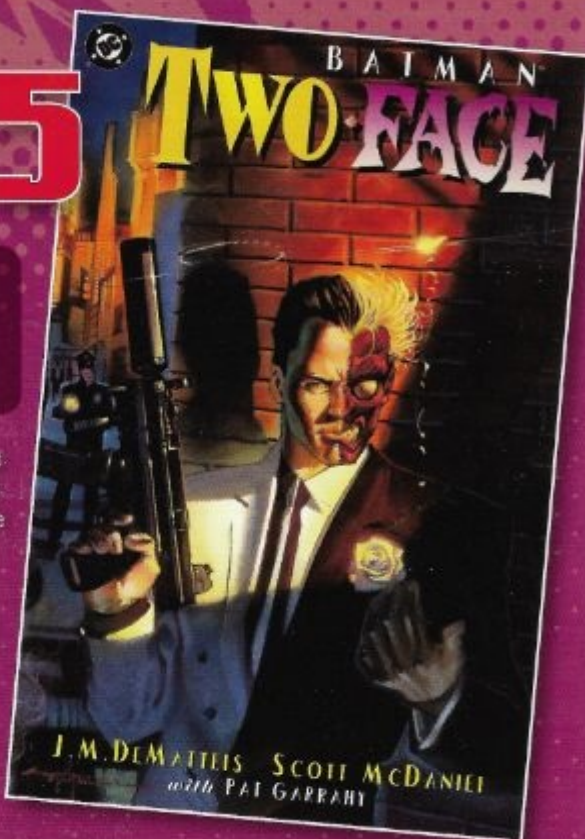
Michal Dutkiewicz and Scott

Hanna. In addition, DC Comics published two prestige format specials that focused on the film's signature villains – Two-Face and the Riddler.

Batman: Two-Face – Crime and Punishment, written by J. M. DeMatteis and illustrated by Scott McDaniel, was an examination of the eponymous villain's damaged psyche. It suggested that Harvey Dent's descent into madness began long before his face was horribly scarred by Sal "Boss" Maroni. As a child, Dent was beaten frequently by his overbearing father. This prompted conflicting feelings in the young boy. He simultaneously hated and loved his father – and thus the seeds of Two-Face's twisted duality were sown. After witnessing a similarly abused youngster being grilled on a confessional-style TV

show, Two-Face finally snapped. He hunted down his father and threatened to execute him on television. Batman came to the rescue, however, not only saving Dent Sr., but also preventing Two-Face from taking his own life. The bleak tale ended on a surprisingly optimistic note – with Batman vowing never to rest in his quest to rehabilitate the tragic villain.

Below: Letting go. *The Dark Knight* urges Harvey Dent to forget his twisted past and purge his psyche of his malevolent alter ego – Two-Face.



COVER STORY

Television also played a pivotal role in *Batman: Riddler – The Riddle Factory*, written by Matt Wagner and illustrated by Dave Taylor. For some seemingly unfathomable reason, the Riddler became a self-styled game-show host – crashing warehouses and theatres to stage a pop-up quiz that was simultaneously broadcast to the viewers of Gotham City. The Riddler didn't seem to have any criminal intent in mind – and the police were baffled by his actions. Batman was convinced that it was all a scam, however, and he eventually deduced that the so-called Riddle Factory was a front to cover up the villain's true purpose. Some decades earlier, mobster "Scarface"





Above: Fear factor. The sinister Scarecrow learns that even he is not immune to feelings of terror.

Scarelli had buried his ill-gotten gains beneath an unspecified building. The Riddler was secretly on the hunt for the lost loot – and the game show was designed to act as a noisy distraction while his partners, Quiz and Query, used jackhammers to tunnel deep beneath the possible locations. The Riddler almost succeeded in securing the big-money prize, but he ultimately lost out when the Dark Knight took to the stage to pull the plug on the bizarre TV extravaganza.

DARK BEGINNINGS

In 1995, DC's summer annuals were all themed around the "Year One" concept – each of them examining the early days of a hero or villain. *Detective Comics Annual* #8 posed new questions about the Riddler's origins, while *Batman: Shadow of the Bat Annual* #3 looked at how Poison Ivy first flourished as an eco-terrorist. The Scarecrow's tormented past as meek Doctor Jonathan Crane was explored in *Batman Annual* #10 – which also recounted the Dark Knight's earliest encounters with the skeletal villain. The story ended with the Scarecrow safely locked up in Arkham Asylum beside Two-Face and the Joker. Nevertheless, Batman worried that his world had taken a dark turn. "Arkham is shaping up as quite a place," he mused. "It scares me."

Things seemed just as bleak in *Robin Annual* #4. Dick Grayson's aerialist parents were callously murdered by circus ringmaster Stan Rutledge at the behest of mobster Anthony "Boss" Zucco. Young Dick



Left: Haunted knight. While in the grip of a fever dream, Batman is visited by three ghostly spirits on the night of Halloween. From *Batman: Ghosts* by Loeb and Sale.

was left an orphan, and seemed destined to spend the remainder of his childhood trapped within an impersonal juvenile care system. Taken under Batman's wing, however, Dick gained vengeance on Rutledge and Zucco and found true purpose and peace of mind as Robin, the Boy Wonder. For his part, Batman acquired a young squire and friend – and a colourful reminder that the world was not always as dark as it first seemed.

Batman: Ghosts – billed as a *Legends of the Dark Knight Halloween Special* – took its inspirations from *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. While delirious from a fever, Bruce Wayne was seemingly haunted by three ethereal spirits. On the night of Halloween, a ghostly Poison Ivy reminded Bruce of his lonely childhood, while a spectral Joker suggested that the hero's present day was empty save for his obsessional need to fight crime. The third visitor was the Grim Reaper, who presented Bruce with a vision of his own grave – the hero's passing seemingly unmourned by all but Alfred Pennyworth. Bruce awoke from his fever dream with a determination to make changes. No longer would he neglect his life as Bruce Wayne. Contacting businessman Lucius Fox, he set in motion plans to create the Wayne Foundation – a charitable organisation that would help the most vulnerable in society. The spirits – whether real or imagined – had taught Bruce a valuable lesson. Charity and compassion were as effective as any other weapon in fighting the machinations of Gotham City's super-villains.

BATMAN #52

(THE JOKER ROADSTER)

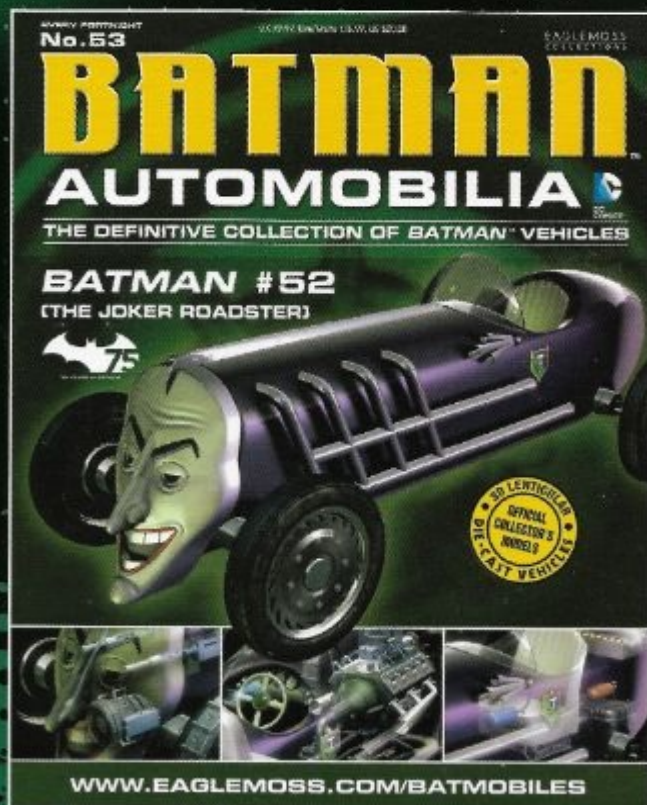


NEXT ISSUE!

The Joker's comedy ride from *BATMAN* #52 is no laughing matter!



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